Mademoiselle Miss

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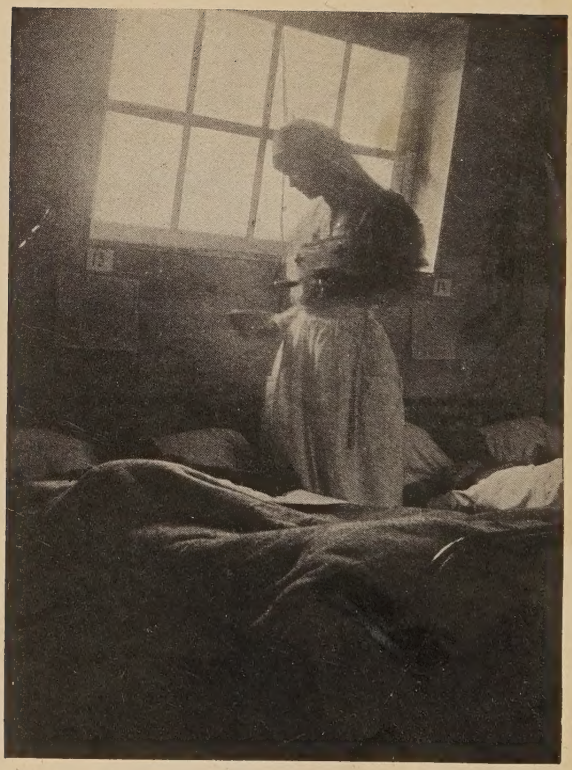

Mademoiselle Miss "

LETTERS FROM AN AMERICAN
GIRL SERVING WITH THE RANK OF
LIEUTENANT IN A FRENCH
ARMY HOSPITAL AT
THE FRONT

WITH A PREFACE BY
DR. RICHARD C. CABOT

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PREFACE

INTIMATE, holy, comforting things stand here and there unharmed in the wrecked villages of France and Belgium, — a crucifix still erect, a sewing-machine, a baby's cradle. This book tells of them. But the record, written "while the instruments are boiling in the sterilizer," is itself one of the most intimate and holy things which have been saved for our comfort out of the whirlpool of embattled Europe. We need the message to keep us sane as we face the horrors of war; even more perhaps to show us the horrors of peace, its awful, silent power to paralyze our faculties, — till they are released by the fight

against war, by the struggle to save life and to banish despair.

What the writer of these letters did for the wounded in France needs no retelling here. But what her loving care of the wounded did for her, and might have done for many of us, her unawakened fellow countrymen, I will venture to sum up.

Despite her fourteen hours daily labor amid the blood and anguish of the hospital she "begins for the first time in her life to feel as a normal being should." Why? Because so much new vigor has been born in her. Under the divine pressure of necessity she becomes inventive as well as competent. The very tools of her trade are often wanting. Inspirations for constructing them "out of nothing" arise in her.

Still better inspired she soon becomes the mother, as well as the nurse, of her charges. Her touch is "as light as a watchmaker's"; her strength suffices to carry a sick man in her arms from his bed to the operating-room, and "there shall be a towel for every man or I will go undried." But when at the end of the day she "has stuffed cotton under all the weary backs and plastered limbs," she "bids all my children good night." Later she has them propped on their pillows in anticipation of the Christmas tree she has dressed for them. Again it is one of her "children," dragged back from death by her good nursing, but still only the wan shadow of a man, who "laughs and tries to clench his fist inside the dressings to show me how strong he is."

He laughs, — and that too is her in-

spiration. "You can't imagine, I suppose, that we laugh and jest all day long. If you can't do that, you may as well get out, for all the good you will ever do a wounded soldier. We ought to be joyous here" (and she can!) "even if men do try to make it a vale of tears; and the more suffering I see the more I think so." How good the gallant laughter sounds across the seas! Surely something of humanity's best is here, not saved from the wreckage but new born of the fiery, fertilizing need.

And with the laughter she brings color and glory too, shaming our drab, peaceful lives. "The sun makes gold patches everywhere, striking through the trophy of flags that I have arranged at the end of the ward, to the great delight of the children."

But the spirit and gallantry of her soldiers, who sit up to write patriotic verse between paroxysms of pain, is not mere light-heartedness. They teach her grave lessons too. "If ever I doubted how to die, my black pearl-fisher from Guadeloupe has shown me the way."

I find in these letters some fragment of true Atonement for the huge sin and blunder of the war. Some deeds of the children of men are better and more beautiful than ever they would have been but for this brave struggle to retrieve something out of the waste and welter of evil.

"Designer Infinite! Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?"

RICHARD C. CABOT.

INTRODUCTION

"MADEMOISELLE MISS," as her soldiers call her, is the daughter of an ex-Medical Director of the United States Navy. At the outbreak of the war she was in France.

Accepted as a helper in a small French hospital on the Riviera, she later served in an English hospital at Mentone. There she heard that an examination was to be held for a nurse's diploma in the French Red Cross. She studied day and night, faced nine doctors in an oral examination of two and a half hours, and passed with credit. Her diploma was signed by the Minister of War; and she was sent to the

front as a member of the regular military organization. She serves, with the rank of lieutenant, at a French army hospital near the trenches of the Marne.

These letters, written in the heat of action, "for one and for one only," have met with a warm response among many sympathetic hearers. Their publication now, without the knowledge of the writer, is justified only in the hope that they may reach a wider circle, and bring help to heroic France.

"MADEMOISELLE MISS"

I

PAVILION V,
September 20, 1915.

I SHOULD like to give you a history of those two last eventful days in Paris from my sudden summons on Thursday to my departure from the solemn metropolis on Sunday at noon. Just imagine a pinwheel in motion, and you get a *multum in parvo* notion of what happened.

The changing scenes of the last few hours keep dancing before my eyes like spots when one has looked at the sun. The lovely vista of the Marne Valley, the constant babble of my eleven sisters in arms, the arrival in a station crowded with men

and munitions, our billeting each in a separate house in the village, supper off tin plates in a long dingy barrack with desperate wounded behind the partition, a scrambling home through the tiny streets lit only by splendid stars and a setting moon, and a night spent in trying to lie flat in a huge feather bed, listening between rapid dreams to the booming of the guns, — these are the elements.

But oh, I can't express what it means to hear the guns for the first time! It is a sensation so vast and lonely and crowded and cosmic all at once that one seems born into a new phase of existence where the old ways of feeling things do not answer any longer.

I am lodged with rank of lieutenant in a splendid big room overlooking a bright garden, with dear old women to take care

of me, and they promise to give me hot water every night, and lots of cold water in the morning, obeying the law of hospitality to satisfy wants they do not understand! In fact everything goes splendidly so far. I'm a soldier now, and get my orders straight from General Headquarters. I am perhaps the only American who has been regularly militarized, certainly in the two societies to which I belong, which are the best in France.

I seize the shining moment this golden afternoon while they finish putting the roof on this new hospital. The wounded may arrive in two days, and to-morrow we shall be tremendously busy with beds and compresses.

September 21, 1915.

This morning with four others I drove out over the surrounding battle-fields smil-

ing and lovely in the warm autumn sun. Everywhere over hill and dale and through the woodland are scattered crosses, gay with flags and flowers now, for it is the anniversary of the Great Victory. The German graves are very neatly and decently kept, but naturally there are no flowers, and the cross is always marked with a black and gray stripe. We passed through three ruined villages, the very abomination of desolation, only an occasional wall or chimney left standing; and what makes the very passion of pathos, small, intimate things often stand out almost intact where heavy masonry has completely vanished, — now a sewing-machine, now a tiny stove, now a baby's cradle quite recognizable.

At L——, where the Church of St. Martin is roofless and gutted, statues, columns,

everything prone and shattered, the statue of St. Martin himself, above where the high altar stood, remains untouched, with not so much as the gilt of his robe blackened. All over France and Belgium patron saints, Madonnas, and crucifixes seem to outlive the bombardment.

What was infinitely comforting, and proof that all wounds heal with time, was the sight of various new little shacks, everywhere planted upon the ruins, with vines already beginning to grow about the doorsteps, and old women knitting in the sun. They had crept back after the flight of the Germans, — a kind of human moss to soften the scars.

September 28, 1915.

The Head Surgeon has just advised me that there will be a convoy of wounded in the night, and I have toddled home from

my supper of meat and beans that taste so good off a tin plate, to put in as much sleep as I can before the orderly comes to wake me, and incidentally my old dames, who will scurry around in their nightcaps and get cold feet, I'm afraid. I can't let you go longer without news, even if the letter is held up by the sanitary trains, or by those 23,000 valid prisoners we've taken in the last few days who must be transported south.

I have installed the whole place, from base-boards up, as a very up-to-date looking operating room, sterilized, ticketed, and in short very neat and complete. The surgeon is very satisfied. Why I was chosen for the exalted post, Heaven only knows. It is altogether too cold and scientific to have only chloroformed men to deal with, when I do love to coddle and

make comfy. As to the latter, however, there will be precious little of it. We are just behind the firing line, and only get desperate cases.

I have arranged, however, that my ward shall have the elemental luxuries. I have made washcloths for every bed in my barracks, and there shall be a towel for each man, or I shall go undried. Also I asked the Head Surgeon for frames on which to tack burlap, for certain beds must be screened. He thought me rather exacting for the front, but will give me what I want. You see I'm absolutely in clover.

And now I have a huge favor to ask. Will you do a little for our soldiers? The cotton gauze here is scant. We use so much! And will you ship to me at once?

II

October 2, 1915.

WORK has begun in earnest. Alas, that I dare not take the time from sleep for more than a hasty scrawl, but when one puts in twelve hours' work daily, one must guard jealously the other twelve. Actually for the first time in my life I begin to feel as a normal being should, in spite of the blood and anguish in which I move. I really am *useful,* that is all, and too busy to remember myself, past, present, or future.

I believe I told you this is a field-hospital, — rather big barracks, six of them, in an enclosure, with an operating-room in the centre, and morgue, kitchen, phar-

macy, bureaus, etc., grouped around. It presents a very natty group with the Red Cross flags flying — in defiance of the *Taubes* which don't seem to dare to come near — and it would look like a play, with its white nurses and bright uniforms, were it not for the big guns that boom incessantly over by W—— to remind one of what is afoot.

I have the operating ward, and have assisted the surgeon at 22 cases in two days. It is perhaps the most important post in the hospital, requiring a head set square. The surgeon, one of the most particular in the Army, hasn't yet corrected me. I also have been directing the sterilization, and yesterday afternoon the Head Surgeon told me he wished me to take charge of the seriously wounded of the celebrated Dr. Tuffier.

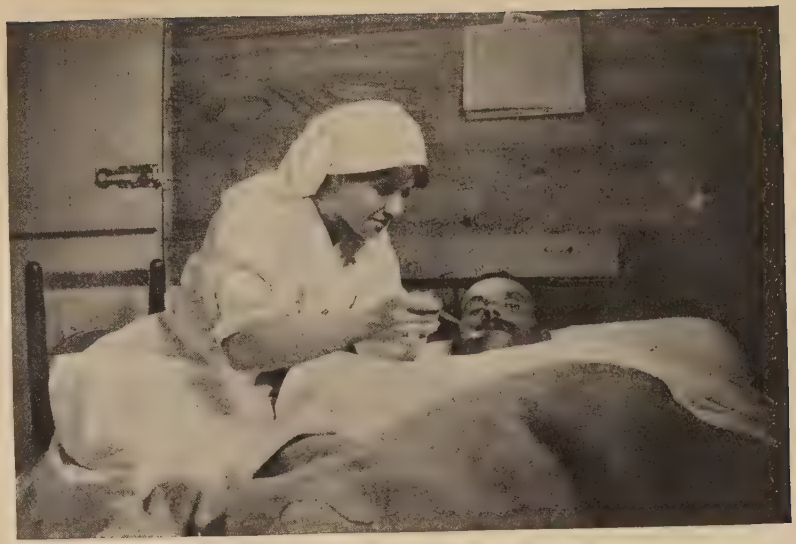
He arrived yesterday with his ten cases which he had picked up off the battle-field; and he claims, with his system, to avoid amputation by constant irrigation of the wound from the start. As soon as possible (it must be within 12 hours), Tuffier begins his work, extracts the *débris*, introduces drains (rubber tubes), several in each opening, and into these every two hours is pumped a dark liquid, "Dakin," — the idea being, as you see, to keep the wound in a constant bath of antiseptic. Once the drains are placed, they are arranged in such a way that the liquid cannot run out. The limb is enveloped in non-absorbent cotton, perforated so as to allow the rubber tubes to project well, and the whole is fixed with a bandage. So there you have your bandaged limb all bristling with tubes, and into these

every two hours is pumped the liquid. There is something sublime and at the same time touching in this one single adventurer faring forth alone on his mission, with the old school of amputators looking on incredulous.

October 8, 1915.

You know how it is in the trenches,—load and fire most of the time. That's how it is here. During the last week, we have averaged 25 operations daily. One day we had 33, and if you have any conception of an operating-room where they are short of assistants, you may know there was not much time left over. But the struggle, and the sense that one is saving bits from the wreckage, doesn't give one a chance to be mastered by the unutterable woe.

In these days I have lost four, two peritonitis, one hemorrhage, one tetanus; and several others are in a desperate condition. I have never left my ward except for six hours' sleep each night, and one hour yesterday when I walked behind the bier in the nurse's post of honor. Every one feels the impressiveness of a military funeral, but it is tenfold more impressive if you take part in it. I wish I could make you see it. The narrow, gable-bordered street, the bareheaded villagers, the glistening bayonets, the poor trembling mourners in rusty crêpe, and at the head, no black hearse, but a great triumphant tricolor following the cross. And the cemetery all mossy and old and vibrant with sunny dews, that has stretched out beyond its ancient cedar-bound limits to receive hundreds and hundreds of new little wooden crosses.



I haven't the time nor the heart to tell you the tale of my days, but I tell you this, that I shall never get hardened to last agonies and heart-broken families. And when my little No. 23 flung out his arms last night to say "Good-by" (he knew he was going) — "O, my sister, my sister! kiss me!" — I tell you it took control to finish giving the last of my 34 anti-tetanus injections a few minutes later.

Speaking of injections, — *please* send me some platinum needles, big and little. I hope you will send cotton and gauze soon, and rubber gloves, too.

III

October 18, 1915.

Sitting in the sun outside my barracks. Midday.

I HAVE an hour of liberty — an unheard-of luxury.

I never dreamed what real work was before, of course; but now I know, and am learning mighty quick to accommodate myself to the revelation, — never to take two steps when I can arrive in one, never to bend over the low beds if I can sit, to relax everything but the occupied hand when I am feeding a patient. These seem little things, but just because of them I am as fit as possible, though I work always more than 14 hours per day.

It is a marvellous life; and strangely enough, despite all the tragedy, I call it a healthy one. One works, and when that is over one sleeps enough to keep in condition, and that is absolutely *all*, except a cold sponge bath (no bath-tubs here), and an eau de cologne rubdown in the morning, and the walk to and from the Hospital. In the morning now it is bitter cold and misty and half dark, and one gets weird glimpses of departing regiments, and white-capped old market-women, and pointed gables across the gloom; and at night the splendid stars, and now a great lustrous moon, and every day and night the boom, boom of the cannon which sounds very awesome these days. That is all I know of the world I live in.

October 27, 1915.

A record day without a death, and everything went like clockwork. I had several inspirations — impossible to live without them here on the front — for constructing important things out of nothing. Don't be surprised if I turn inventor! One has to out here.

The day has been tremendous, and the first in which I have not lost a life. Indeed, I saved one by compressing a hemorrhage in the nick of time.

We soldiers are hard pressed these days. The wounded pour in day and night by trains, — by American autos[1] too, but I can't take a minute to run out to salute my countrymen. We discharge our pa-

[1] This is a reference to the American Ambulance Field Service which has 120 ambulances working at the front, all driven by American volunteers.

tients as fast as we can, and bury dozens a week. It is all like a weird dream, laughter (for they laugh well, the soldiers) and blood and death and funny episodes, and sublime also, all under the autumn stars.

What a gorgeous day, all gold and blue, and all the little pine pavilions glimmer in the light like enchanted dwellings in a fairy play! It is impossible to realize out here all the misery and foul smells and horrid sights just behind those boards. Out here under the burnished skies all that seems repulsive, but once inside it comes natural and as a matter of course. Just one thing tries me eternally — the *flies!* Oh, for some Pied Piper to pipe them all into the Marne! The swarms devour my poor patients, and I haven't gauze enough to cover them. Talk of the

plagues of Egypt! I pray that the cold may soon come and save us, — a local cold that spares the trenches!

Speaking of lack of gauze, — I lack everything. For my surgical dressings room I have had to buy everything or go without, which is distinctly impossible. Cuvettes, glass jars, cups, oilcloth, syringes, needles, all in fact lacking but the pharmacy. *Ether is a memory here. Please* send the needles and all the other things. To-day I got another thermometer and feel rich. Imagine taking 34 temperatures twice a day with one! Now I do all my own dressings. I'm dog-tired to-night, but very well.

IV

November 5–10, 1915.

IT is all neat and clean here in my tiny surgical dressings room, and while the instruments are boiling and my 29 children are resting after their midday soup, I can conscientiously snatch just a minute. The work is a bit lighter to-day, because four have been discharged this A.M., and the beds have not been filled.

Ever since I began my work I have been watching for a chance to sketch for you at least one day in detail, that you may have some vague idea of this unique and inexpressible life.

At quarter to six A.M., I am up and sponged and well flesh-brushed. My good old lady gives me a huge bowl of coffee

and four lumps of sugar, bread and butter, and a boiled egg, for 12 cents — an extravagance which I indulge in to avoid the probable consequence of the long walk to the Hospital on an empty stomach through the mists of the Marne, which are thick and weird enough in the early morning. It is a devious way through mud and mist, and almost anything is likely to cross your path, — a bent, white-capped old woman like a stray from some old Dutch painting, a black cat, lean and rusty (everything is hungry about here); an aëroplane wheeling about on the watch for *Taubes* which are frequent and fiery these days; a convoy of automobiles driving at top speed to the trenches; the dim wraith of a funeral procession disappearing in the distance.

When I get to my pavilion, there is sure to be "Grandpa," my treasured old orderly,

busy at brushing out the entrance. He immediately drops his broom, and holds out his good brawny hand to hope that his "Mademoiselle Miss" (the name I am generally known by) has slept well, and will not work too hard during the coming day. Grandpa is my Eternal Vigilance, always on hand, always ready to do every bidding, and zealous to spare me every possible fatigue. Last week he and my other orderlies were ill — he and Karbiche, the merry faithful clown, with bronchitis, and Loupias with tonsilitis and a bad bone-felon — and I had to carry my patients to the surgical dressings room myself. He nearly wept with chagrin.

The first thing I do, after a word of greeting to each of the 34 children, is to review the ward and see that it is well washed, in order, and no spoons or bottles

out of place, and to start instruments boiling. After that begin the temperatures. Along with the temperatures go face-washing and mouth-rinsing, generally engineered by faithful Grandpa. About half-past eight, the doctor makes his appearance. When he has made the tour of the ward, I am left complete mistress of the scene for the rest of the day, with 34 lives in my hand more than half of which hang in the balance. If there is anything critical, I send for the big surgeon, and he always comes graciously, which is a great mark of confidence. About 9 A.M. I begin the dressings, unless there are anti-tetanus injections to give for those who may have arrived in the night, or some one is dying, or there is an urgent operation. But we shall suppose an uninterrupted day. I begin with the important

dressings, which are often long and danger-
ous, and I can do but three or four before
the bell rings for soup at 10.45 A.M.

I think you would sicken with fright
if you could see the operations that a poor
nurse is called upon to perform — the
putting in of drains, the washing of
wounds so huge and ghastly as to make one
marvel at the endurance that is man's, the
digging about for bits of shrapnel. I as-
sure you that the word responsibility takes
a special meaning here. After the soup
for the wounded, comes that of the nurses,
when all crowd into a tiny plank hut, and
stuff meat and potatoes as fast as we can
between disjointed bits of gossip. Im-
mediately after lunch I spend an hour or
so setting to rights the surgical dressings
room, doing little services, and distribut-
ing cakes or bonbons. It is amazing

how a bit of peppermint will console a soldier when a smile goes with it!

Dressings all the afternoon until it is time for temperatures; then soup for the soldiers; and mine, which is soon finished; then the massage for those that need it, etc., after which I prepare my soothing drinks and give the injections. It is the sweetest time of the day, for then one puts off the nurse and becomes the mother; and we have such fun over the warm drinks. They are nice and sweet and hot, and the soldiers adore their "American drinks."

When this is done, I go around and stuff cotton under weary backs and plastered limbs, bid all the children good-night, polish my instruments, clean out the surgical dressings room, and hurry home through the frosty night.

This is the rough outline of an ordinary day, and into that let your fancy weave all that is too holy or terrible, too touching or humorous to put into words — the last kiss a soldier gives you for his family he will never see; the watches with the priest when all is still and dark, but for the light of my little electric lamp and a bit of moonlight through the window; the agonies and heroisms; the wit and affection that play like varied lights and darks along the days.

All in the midst of a gory dressing, with the wind driving snow flurries past a broken window, came the baggage master and popped a fat lot of letters into the big front pocket of my apron.

The joyous news has come that the cotton, etc., are on the way. The pressure has been terrible. After a comparative

lull, dreadful cases have been pouring in. As for what is being done over there for these poor men, I can only say, God bless all the generous donors! None can imagine what the help will mean. Why, daughters of France could not have done more!

V

November 18, 1915.

NIGHT before last I believe I saved a man for good, who would not have survived the night. But oh, what I need is a great strong intelligent man, always devoted and always right there to follow instructions. He should be six feet, never tired, never out of humor, tender as a woman, and muscled like Ajax! What a lot we could do!

I have tried to hint my gratitude for the generous gifts coming to this poverty-stricken hospital. The goods will be no idle superfluity, I can tell you. Up to now we have been allowed almost nothing to work with, and now a general order has

gone forth from the Army Headquarters to economize on that. When I tell you that I have one large needle for my whole Pavilion, and that I am obliged to give on an average of fifteen injections a day with it — and as if that were not enough, the doctor frequently asks to borrow it for another hospital, you may guess how it all goes. But when the doctor brings it back — he knows I hate to lend it — he always says with his most winning smile — "I am bringing back the baby to his mother."

No child ever awaited Santa Claus with half the impatience that seizes me every time I think of the arrival of the *Rochambeau*.[1] I feel more like Cherry-Garrard

[1] Steamship sent to France from America with hospital supplies.

and his comrades, shut up in their Antarctic hole for the winter, wondering how long supplies will hold out, and when the ship will come. Really, it is poverty beyond description, only the strange part of it is that you would never suspect anything of the sort if you should enter the gates of our little Hospital on a sunny morning when flags are flying and fir trees, carefully planted as if it were a terrace at Versailles, throw their pointed shadows across the frosted paths — care-free as you please. Ah, it is what makes the charm of the boulevards and the tragedy of the Parisian garrets.

The father of one of my wounded — a rich merchant of Havre — has given me two thermometers — one that descends automatically, — and I love it; but oh, the lacks! Perhaps the hardest to bear,

now that I have provided myself with instruments and the *Rochambeau* has sailed, are the alimentary and medicinal ones.

One man I am keeping alive on malted milk ordered from Paris and fresh eggs — the hospital milk being utterly undrinkable, and the eggs preserved. The Head Surgeon regards my little efforts as a symptom of benign lunacy, but he lets me do as I please. Alas, sentiment, intuition, endeavor, don't take the place of science. When I realize my actual ignorance it would utterly terrify me if I did not know I am meant to be just here, and am learning every day from experience, if not from books and masters.

You can't imagine, I suppose, that we laugh and jest all day long? Yet so it is, and if you can't do that, you might as well

get out, for all the good you will ever do a *French* wounded soldier. Why, I believe his very wounds wouldn't heal if he were not allowed to make merry over them, and he will jest with you up to the hour before he dies — a mixture of wit and pathos too poignant ever to reproduce.

Number nine, contusion cerebrale trepannation, etc., has just waked up. He sees me writing. "Mademoiselle, will you give my greetings to your family?" ("Mademoiselle, donnez bien le bonjour à votre famille pour moi, n'est-ce pas?")

Echoed by No. 4. "And mine also, Mademoiselle." ("Ainsi que moi, Mademoiselle.") Poor fellow, he can hardly be here long!

My little boy from Havre, 19 years old, with resection of the shoulder and a temperature that refuses to moderate (which

disquiets me much, for there is no obvious reason save a high-strung temperament), speaks English very well. One day he was looking at my insignia — A. D. F. and a bar. "What's your rank, Mademoiselle?" I told him. "Then I think they should call you Lieutenant of the Life Guards!" Pretty, wasn't it? I suppose that you know that war surgery calls for antiseptics much more powerful than are used in ordinary peace operations. For instance, alcohol 95%. It is no joke to pour alcohol into a gaping wound, and No. 1, though brave as can be, resents it intensely. One day, as he gripped the sides of the operating table to keep from upsetting my arrangements, he gave me a quizzical look: "Sister, why are you tempting me so when you know very well that the government has strictly forbidden our taking any sort of alcohol?"

I wish you could see my ward just now, with the wintry sunlight streaming in, making us all think we are warmer! Imagine, it is not yet December, and the mercury is down nearly to zero Fahrenheit. It takes some nerve to dress in white linen with sleeves above the elbows! But we don't mind when the sun shines, making bright gold patches everywhere, and striking through the trophy of flags that I have arranged down there at the end of the ward to the great delight of the children.

There hang the flags of all the Allies, except Japan, which wasn't to be had, and there is a wee Stars and Stripes at the point of the shield made by our obliging carpenter. The electric lights overhead are draped in tricolor, and on the table is one red rose brought me from Paris.

It is not so bad for a "front" hospital, and wonder of wonders, it's *clean* — and that by dint of much strategy. It used to be awful. But there are two ways of appealing to a Frenchman, through his heart and through his pride. When you work both together, you have his body and soul. And so, when my orderlies saw me on my knees scrubbing, they came to the rescue, and then I clinched the matter with the flags and the suggestion that *ours* should be the model ward. It worked! But of course one doesn't count on the morrow.

November 28, 1915.

The Germans are trying to take back Tahure, and the guns, silent these last days, have been sounding with a dread persistency across the frozen miles. Best proof that something is afoot — *the bulletins*

are silent. It is unspeakable — this waiting — and listening — and wondering.

I left my men at half-past eight. The cruel cold that nearly finished us all has suddenly given place to a regular equinoctial downpour that bids fair to turn the narrow streets to rivers. The trenches will be lagoons, and how on earth the projected German attack can ever be brought to pass I leave Joffre to imagine! As I paddled along through the tempest a bent old man, probably a veteran of 1870, with a huge, ancient umbrella pulled down about his ears, passed me. He looked picturesque and kindly enough by the light of my brave little lamp. "Poor girl," he murmured, "without any umbrella, like the soldiers!" He wouldn't have believed, I suppose, even had I stopped to argue with him, how I delighted

in the storm, in the fresh, stimulating wetness after the heavy air of the ward, and in the exclusive properties of my excellent blue cape and hood!

A dramatic thing happened just at midnight. At five minutes to twelve I blew out my wee lamp and knelt at the open window. The heavens were shrouded and it was raining; but just as the first stroke of midnight sounded, the cloud-roof split and vanished, and at the end of the twelfth, as gorgeous a firmament stretched over us as Johannes Agricola ever contemplated.

They've sent away many of my children (a decided lull everywhere), but I love all the better those that are left.

The fewer my wounded, the more I work. That may be a slight exaggeration, but it is perfectly true that with nineteen patients all in serious case one undertakes

a great many things that one wouldn't dare think of for 33, and under the delusion that one has plenty of time, one does things with a sort of refined thoroughness, so that the day is gone before one realizes.

You will like to hear of the living skeleton with wounds in back and hands and shoulder that they brought me filthy and nearly dead from another pavilion. That was nine days ago. I diagnosed him as a case of neglect and slow starvation, and treated him accordingly — malted milk, eggs, soap, and alcohol to the fore. His dressings took one and a half hours every day, and all nourishment given a few drops at a time, and nearly all the time, for he was almost too weak to lift an eyelid, much less a finger. This morning he actually laughed with me and tried to clench his fist inside the dressings to show

me how strong he was. He's *saved*, and that makes up for much.

As I have several times written, cotton, gauze and needles and gloves have finally all come — the last a week ago — a gift from the very gods all of it. But just now the gloves and needles are my special joy. Now that I am able to protect myself from danger, I realize what a serious privation I underwent before. If you knew the sort of cases I handle, you'd realize what an armor you've given me; and how perfectly satisfactory they are — strong as steel, and so light and elastic that one's touch is rather sensitized than impaired, even in the most delicate operation. The needles are great, and as for cotton and gauze, I breathe freely to think that at the next attack there will be a pavilion in the Hospital fit to receive the wounded.

VI

December 27, 1915.

THIS being an essentially Christmas Number we'll omit professional data and all the tragic things, to show you the bright side of the battle. Don't forget there is one, and it is good to reveal it from time to time, lest we lose faith in living, and get bound to the wheel. One can lay too much stress on the shambles, the misery, the cruelty, at the expense of finer realities, and if Robert Louis Stevenson were here he'd perfectly agree with me! All of which goes to show that the Star of Bethlehem has shone very close above my humble shelter at this blessed season, and that the Angel of Death has

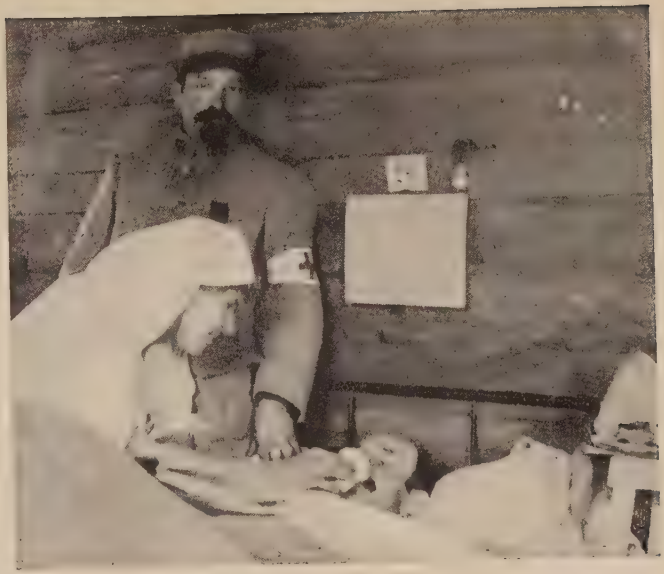
not passed over it. For which I am so utterly thankful that my heart is as light as a lark's to-day; and it has learned —as our soldiers learn to sleep in the trenches — not to forecast alarms for the morrow.

It was over a month ago, when the stress of death and swift changes was at its height, that for once in my life I had a flash of forethought for Christmas; and when the Government offered me six days' leave of absence to which we are entitled at this time, I refused it instantly. Mothers who love their children don't go off and leave them with empty stockings then. And the soldier, more than any other creature in the world, I believe, does love to be diverted.

I happened to tell my scheme to the young chemist who helps in the operating

room. As he forwards me in every way, — from carrying wounded to providing me with chocolates which quickly disappear down thirty-three throats, — he suggested interesting his mother and her Paris friends. Then there is a dear bonnie old woman who plays the rôle of fairy godmother to my ward. For a long time I never knew who she was or where she came from; but twice a week, just at soup-time, in would trot the dear, quaint creature, all tied up in a woollen fichu and laden with a huge basket filled for the whole family. Sometimes it held baked apples all sticky with jelly, sometimes a thick savory pottage steaming hot, sometimes tarts, or ripe pears — always a digestible inspiration. She'd slip in, set the basket on the table, and slip out, often before I had time to thank her. Later I found it was Mme.

Nebout who keeps the tiny grocery in the rue de Frémicourt; and I was almost sorry to place her, she was so like a figure out of Hans Andersen. One day I caught her on the fly to ask if she could help me order a tree. Her keen, wrinkled eyes just danced. Not only she'd help me, but she knew a horticulturist who'd give me one if she said so, and she'd give me all the ribbons, and some handkerchiefs, and there was a confectioner who had bonbons to spare. So immediately I took heart and saw my little festa taking stately proportions. A little thinking at nights, and three pilgrimages to town, of an hour and a half each, did the rest; and Christmas Eve you couldn't have found a prettier tree in the whole Republic than lifted its glimmering branches towards the rafters of Pavilion V.



Mme. B., my young friend's mother, sent me a portly case with many bonbons, cigarettes, twenty pipes, and biscuits in profusion; and my good dames that house me so cheerfully tucked ten francs under my breakfast plate, and I myself stretched several points, "for Xmas comes but once a year." So that at half-past six on Christmas Eve when the Head Surgeon came, very nervous, to preside over the lighting of those precarious candles, he saw a quite enchanting sight.

All the fourteen windows of the ward garlanded with ivy for which a faithful orderly had ferreted in the neglected environs; all my twenty-nine wounded — the family is lacking four — propped on their pillows in anticipation; and in the middle our Tree, all a-glitter with bright globes and dozens of candles and bending

under the weight of my tiny gifts — attached with tricolor. At the very top a tinsel star constructed by me and an able-handed patient, with the tricolor at the topmost point — above the stars, mark you — and little silk flags of the Allies clustered below, with a microscopic Stars and Stripes. All this was surprise and excitement enough, but no one was prepared for the grand coup that was to follow.

After the Tree was lighted I flew off to the supplies room with "Grandpa" and a few minutes later out stepped as perfect a Père Noël as ever walked through the pages of a story book — a French Father Christmas — no Santa Claus. A blue-gray cape covered him from top to toe, and on the long white beard and peaked hood the fresh snow glistened cheerily — a combination of mica, boracic acid, and cotton,

not at all banal — in his hand a knotted cane and classic lantern, feet tucked in deep, turned-up wooden shoes, and on his back a basket with oranges and cakes for the whole hospital. You should have seen the joy and astonishment that accompanied his progress from pavilion to pavilion, several of us following to distribute the goodies!

Once when we went into an isolation ward where a poor fellow was languishing in the last stage of septic poisoning, there happened something strange and infinitely touching. He must have taken the apparition for something heavenly; for first a dazed look came over his face, then a marvellous smile, and he stretched out his arms. I bent down and whispered a Christmas message, and put an orange in his hand. It was his last consciousness.

"Grandpa" acquitted himself masterfully. He made enchanting little discourses as if he had been a real actor instead of a simple peasant from the Oise; and the Head Surgeon, who at first had been dubious about the undertaking, was delighted.

When the distribution was over, I filled the arms of Père Noël with red roses to distribute among the nurses, and he made an effect in blue, white, and red — blue mantel, white beard, red roses — that was altogether delightful. After that he gave to each of the doctors a little box daintily engraved with a wreath of flags and filled with dates I had stuffed at midnight. And then I began the distribution in my ward. Each patient had a "Victory Packet" — four sheets of writing paper, four envelopes, and an ink pencil tied with tricolor — a tiny mirror (they adore

to look at themselves !), a tiny comb in a case, a bright package of bonbons, and a package of cigarettes. Tiny things, but all I could afford, and you would have thought Paradise had opened for them.

I forgot to mention that one of my wounded made a speech from his bed, and every one cheered for "Mlle. Miss."

December 31, 1915.

There have been various changes of which I will tell you in my next. Gauze, cotton, gloves, and needles all there ! Thanks, thanks, and God bless you ! It's a new year of promise. I believe we *ought* to be joyous no matter if men do try to make it a vale of tears, and the more suffering I see, the more I think so.

VII

January 16, 1916.

BEFORE I touch on my daily doings —such a swift monotony of change that they show a still white on the screen like the shadow from a spinning rainbow —I will try for once to be definite. I have already written several times that I have been the radiant recipient of a thousand yards of gauze, 100 pounds of absorbent cotton, six needles, and six dozen pairs of gloves, made in a practical corner of Paradise, and 25 lbs. of ether and a box from the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital which I will acknowledge separately, plus such a lot of encouragement as will last me for the rest of the war. All this seems opulence enough — and now this morning

comes that glorious list of fresh blessings from our golden shores. All at once America has become Cathay to me — a far more luminous discovery than Columbus ever dreamed of — a Promised Land, flowing with ether and cotton and all sorts of surgical delights. All of a sudden I find myself growing patriotic, to a degree I never knew in former days. It's quite true that whenever I turn my eyes toward the end of my ward, where hangs the bright trophy I told you about, the little American banner below with the light shining through gives me a wee thrill that is quite peculiar, and makes me think that some day I may be a better American.

January 19, 1916.

All sorts of changes, visits of Generals, discharges, etc., have kept me too busy to

write. It's a thousand pities that I can't give you so much as a penny glimpse of this weird and wonderful theatre, where I play the rôle now of scene-shifter, now of leading lady, and anything between except, let's hope, the villain, and where such dramas and comedies are enacted as no stage ever saw. Let me try to tell you at least something about one or two of my wounded.

Gaston is of the stuff that will make France victorious. He's a little fish dealer of Paris, staunch and sane of soul and limb, the kind that goes out alone on patrol, and brings down his Boche every time, and wears the cross at 19 without bragging, — the kind that is equal to anything from writing patriotic verse that brings tears to your eyes, to outwitting his nurse and always getting his way. He was only

slightly wounded and got into my service by mistake; but that wretched little wound in his thigh would never heal despite my most intelligent efforts. At last he was well enough to get up and suddenly, without any suggestion or instruction, Gaston became my chief assistant. He cut my cottons, folded compresses, helped with bandages, polished my instruments, did a thousand little fine things that I could never trust to my orderlies, and when we were alone at work after "lights out" we talked philosophy. We didn't cry when we separated only because we're good soldiers.

A pearl fisher — a good Catholic and a brave fighter — had come from the sunny shores of Guadeloupe, to die for France. When they amputated his leg they didn't

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discover that there was a ball in his back. I found it when I took Pavilion V. But then it was too late. Every day the fever mounted higher, and every day his black cheeks grew thinner; but he always kept saying "It is going well," in the sweet caressing tones that recalled early lullabies. Never a murmur, always a smile. The last day our faithful priest confessed him — he knew just enough French for that — and it was moonlight when he went, one of us kneeling either side. After Extreme Unction he pressed my hand; and suddenly a marvellous change passed over his face as if it had grown white and luminous. "Mama," he murmured, "Louis," then fainter and sweeter — "O mon bon Dieu," and it was over, and nothing remained but a radiating smile. I went to lay him away among

the heroes; and if ever I doubted how to die, my black pearl fisher from Gaudeloupe has shown me the way.

They brought Croya in half-unconscious, with seven suppurating wounds. It was late, and I did the first examination and dressing unassisted. The next day, they overhauled him in the operating room, decided he was hopeless, and handed him over to me. It is one of the few dressings I have had that really frightened me; for it was so long, and every day for a week or more, I extracted bits of cloth and fragments of metal, sometimes at a terrifying depth. Besides my patient was savage and sullen, all that is ominous in the Arab nature. Gradually, however, the suppuration ceased, the fever fell, and suddenly one day Croya smiled.

It was so utterly surprising and transforming that we all rubbed our eyes. From the first I had tried to win his confidence, but I was always repulsed with a kind of grave scorn. The day after he smiled, he said "Thanks, Mama," when I gave him an orange, and when No. 15 asked why he called me that, he explained in his weird French that I was just like a Mama. After that it was all simple enough. When Croya got better he used to help to do his own dressing, and when Mama had a minute she'd go and sit beside him and he'd lay his cheek against her arm, and teach her Arab words. As he grew better he was crazy to play some music. So when Karabiche went to Paris on leave, he brought back a flute; then Croya would half sit up in bed with his shaved head tipped against his tempera-

ture chart, and play soft, strange, wild melodies that had all the mystery of the Algerian plains in them. Every night the last thing I did was to slip some edible jest into his hand — a cold orange or a sticky bonbon, or cracker crumbs that got lost in the bed unless I lit my electric lamp to find them; and we'd stifle our amusement so as not to wake the others. I explained to the Head Surgeon that I had tamed my Arab, and I wanted to keep him till he was well enough to go back. But then that heartless General B. came and sent away nearly every one, and Croya had to go.

His despair was poignantly touching. Orientals do not weep; but he wouldn't eat, he developed a temperature, all the light left those wide, brown eyes, and he kept repeating all day, "I am not going —

I am not going!" When he started he had a ticket pinned to his cap on which I had written careful instructions to treat him attentively. I asked him how much money he had: he answered, "I am very rich." That was all the satisfaction I had till I found his pitiful little purse with just five cents inside. I put in two dollars with the rest, midst incoherent protestations from Croya. I tucked him in his blankets in the auto, and the last I heard was "Au revoir, Mama" in tones that I can never forget.

He reached Toulouse a week ago and every day since, I've had a card written by some comrade and signed "The child who does not forget his Mama." One, illustrated, had a rather too passionate couplet. The next day I got one representing a child who says to its mother,

"Little mother, how much I love you," and Croya explains that it was a comrade who played a joke "because I don't know how to read. Forgive me, Mama." Perhaps Croya is the only son I shall ever have, but I thank Heaven for giving me, to nurse and love, this poor wild child of the desert.

But now — to come back to utensils — I am desperately excited over the future possession of rubber bottles and cushions, and oh! malted milk and oil-cloth! That was the time you were inspired. You ask what is most needed. For the moment, bandages, wider ones and flannel ones and medium ones, 7 to 10 metres long. We are washing and re-washing our bandages even now.

I tell you that here on the front it

isn't just a mere nurse that is required; send the finest, most versatile woman that America or any other country can produce, and her fineness and her gifts will not be wasted. To be ideally adapted to the post she should combine a glacial calm with the unfailing gayety of springtime, and a sense of humor always; she should possess law and order and arrangement, the powers of construction and invention, a touch as light as a watchmaker's, and strength to carry a man alone on occasion; she should combine tremendous initiative with excessive caution, firmness with tenderness, authority with courtesy, fearlessness with awe, and she ought to be a psychologist, and deeply learned in the profession, and ready to read the riot-act when called for.

Extract from letter to E. D.

Feb. 27/16.

This A.M. a telegram came to expect 300 wounded this evening. The first time I have seen my *salle* vacant. And all those dear things I have been wooing back to life and strength were bundled off to the station. All the best reserves of France have been hurrying to Verdun in these days to meet the Crown Prince's attack. It is the sixth day of a conflict, they say, unprecedented. We know nothing except that every frontier town is crowded with wounded, and the battle rages, and we have retired several kilometres. The suspense is agonizing.

Feb. 27/16.

All alone in my great *salle!* and truth to tell "*la petite mère,*" that's what the children call me now — is feeling pretty

desolate as she looks down the two long rows of lifeless beds, all lined and squared for inspection, and only the dull, dim roar of the guns to break the stillness. The light falls softly enough through tri-colored folds, the stars after the storm wink kindly through the windows, there are fresh flowers on the table, and a smell of *eau de javel* and cleanliness everywhere — a scene to rejoice an inspector's heart. Not mine. My thoughts follow those poor children, so rudely routed out of their beds this morning and sent trundling off in carts and *brouettes* — anything one can find, since all available autos are requisitioned for Verdun — to the station, to make room for the latest victims of the Crown Prince. And I see my poor "skeleton" — well-fattened now, but pale with distress, and far too frail still to

undertake a 48-hour journey; and his next-door neighbor — the Tuffier triumph —"*notre chère Jean*" who so adores petting; and my gold-haired, pink-cheeked little Sergeant Vic—— the prize baby, who looked so sweet in a white chemise (I confess to the weakness of reserving the best-looking one for him), and who was more afraid of being tickled than of having his fracture dressed; — and all the others, perfectly miserable to go, but resigned with that matchless resignation that characterizes the French *poilu*. The *Médecin-Chef* had a telegram this morning demanding every bed in the Ambulance, after which came a series of orders and counter-orders, and making and unmaking and remaking of beds, and shifting and replacing of patients, enough to make us all lose our minds if we hadn't been

drilled by months of the same thing; with the final result that everybody is gone, including several *opérés* still dull with chloroform. After all this scurry and frantic cleaning, the wounded may not arrive for a day or two, "*Mais dans la vie militaire il ne faut jamais chercher à comprendre.*" Meantime, this Verdun affair keeps us all at tremendous tension: — the seventh day of the attack and still the engines of destruction hammer as they have never hammered since the beginning of time. First we lost, then we gained, now no one knows what is happening. There's always the far-off cannonade to remind us of the epoch, there's generally an aëroplane sentry overhead, and the other night going home it was really dramatic. It was the night when two entire *corps d'armée* passed through Vitry

— a continuous stream of *camions* from five o'clock in the afternoon till four or five the next morning. I had to cross the line of march, and for over a half hour I stood watching, fascinated, forgetful of the cold, and hard work next morning, while one after one the autos passed at even pace, the single little light shielded above to trick the aëros; and the cold, comfortless inside crowded with armed men singing and jesting as though it were a hay ride on an August evening. They had no idea where they were going, most of them hadn't even a cigarette, it was unbearably cold and damp, but nobody seemed to care; they were all going to help the *copains* together, and together they sang as if it were all a big jest: "*Aupres de ma blonde, tara, tara, tara, ra ra,*" etc., etc., and one was dangerously near

having the sand-man drowned out of one's eyes. Now we know those joy-riders are all at Verdun, and many of them will never come back!

March 13/16.

The last you heard of me I was waiting for wounded. Well, they came — 300 in one night, the latest victims of Verdun, in such a condition as beggars description, and pales all my former experiences. We've never had such a rush as this, and the Ambulance, decimated by illness as it is just now, was quite demoralized. Usually the rough filth of the trenches is removed in the *dépouillage*, but on that night there was no time for such daintiness, and they were dumped right into their beds with all manner of blood and mud caked to their shivering bodies. Imagine my despair over my clean sheets,

so hard to come by! But such despair was too trivial, beside the horrors one was powerless to cope with. Both operating rooms worked all night and all the next day and most of the next night (the same *équipe!*) but in spite of that more than one life was lost that could have been saved had there been a third. Most of my wounded arrived with their first dressings (provisionary) which had been done five days before, — even in winter you may know what that means, and the kind of work it gave me — for the next two days. One poor fellow, an Arab, and as beautiful a son of Islam as ever ranged the desert, had lain two days with an undressed wound in the leg before he was picked up. As soon as I looked at his body I knew it was *gangrène gazeuse*, but whether too far advanced for interven-

tion I did *not* know. The pulse was scarcely perceptible. I tried to stoke him with caffeine and camphorated oil while I waited for the surgeon, — a tragically long wait. This is the worst of these arrivals *en masse*, for one is proverbially alone — trusting to Heaven and a hasty glance that none of the other newcomers needed me as much. When B. came at last he said the gases had gained the abdomen and there was nothing to be done. I had him carried into the *salle d'isolement*, where in accordance with the latest adaptation of Darwin's law, I should have abandoned him for the others. But, being more a creature of sentiment than reason I couldn't, and happily my duty didn't require it, for no one else was *in extremis*. So every few minutes I slipped in to do something perfectly useless that

might perhaps give a ray of comfort. He was conscious, talked disconnectedly of home and mother, wondered if I'd let him stay with me a day or two before being sent to the interior: "I am *so tired*," he said. When I washed the blood from his face and hands, half-furtively, for here they ridicule such things, he took my hands and kissed them; then I gave him half an injection of morphine, unable to bear the thought of his suffering alone and knowing no one would go to him, and left toward dawn to get a few hours' sleep before the next day's engagement. "You are going, *Mlle.?*" "Yes, but you must be good and sleep well. I'll come back early, and then we'll write a nice long letter to your mother." He made a movement as if to detain me. Then changing to Arab — "Alesh," he mur-

mured, which is equivalent to our "God's will be done" — and smiled faintly. A few hours later when I opened the door, the bed was empty and only a ghastly pool where he had lain. — But I mustn't tell you any more of such tales.

March 14/16.

All my *infirmiers* were ill at once, and I only had two wretched greenhorns through the next week (a little too ignorant even to peel our daily cartload of potatoes). With such guests you can imagine I had no chance to write even a card. Wild work with thirty dressings a day, and everybody to wash from head to foot, and beds to make and a good deal of the carrying, beside the temperatures and usual details, and preparing the materials.

Just one word. In all these months I don't believe I've ever mentioned the *exquisite* compensation that comes almost daily in the shape of cards and letters from my children — often very illiterate, but so full of heart — "*Chère petite mère,*" they begin, "*Ma bonne petite maman,*" "*Notre gentille Mademoiselle Miss,*" etc. And Gaston, you remember my naughty, adorable Gaston? writes me regularly from the trenches. Yesterday, I got another poem, written under a bombardment, decorated with crossed swords, — *croix de guerre,* — very *chic,* entitled "*Non, Verdun Jamais!*" He's the best patriot in the republic, is Gaston, and my, how he *does* love to trumpet victory, — and curses on the Kaiser!

March.

. . . I never finished the story of Capt. M. Occasionally, I'd hear a firm step along the *salle*, and a clear voice call out — "Is Mlle. Miss visible?" and there he stood at the door of my cage (*salle de pansements* is too dignified), good to see, and bracing as a channel breeze; lithe and muscular, in a uniform that *fitted*, with a face absolutely handsome because its honest ugliness, and high-bred withal. One day, he said, "What would you like for your *blessés?* You can have anything you like!" I gasped, and stammered something about gum-drops or cigarettes — "Is that all? Wouldn't you like a gramophone? That's better than a piano — no work for you — and if you move on you can take it with you." Would I? I almost wept right there as I thought of

the joy of the children who never have anything to relieve the monotony, except some occasional silly prank of mine that is never musical. So it was arranged that I should have one straight from England with all the latest records, and meantime he'd "steal a march on the boys" and lend us theirs. The next day he appeared with 50 francs worth of cigarettes and the gramophone! You may believe we worked those records as they never had been worked before, with such joyous results. It was rather a shock when the very day after came a telegram — ominously prophetic of Verdun — that ordered the St. John's Ambulance away — "*destination inconnue.*" Captain M. came to say good-by and get the gramophone. On leaving he gave me 100 francs to "buy paper for them to

write to their best girls."—Just one week later, Sunday noon, as I crossed the court, my gallant Englishman appeared. He had come all the way from Bar-le-Duc to wish me good-day. He admired my stock of bandages and I made him up a package, and meantime we had a good talk about the world in general. It was good to talk to some one who really thinks and feels. That was the last I saw of him, nor have I heard. I hope with all my heart those bandages weren't prophetic.

Well, I'm going to Paris — after six months here day after to-morrow. I can't believe it, hate to go, am almost afraid to, as if the ennui of separation from work were a beast that could devour me. But there is another big evacuation, and as there is a tie-up somewhere in the transportation system now that we depend on

Verdun instead of Champagne, it is a strategic moment to take a breathing space and arrange my affairs in Paris.

PARIS, March 19/16.

After exactly six months to-day since I quitted Paris, behold me once more in the arms of the enchantress. Her embrace is a bit stifling and her charms none too vivid, but then I haven't had much chance to fall under her spell, pressed as I am by the affairs of the moment and haunted by the dear wistful faces I have left.

Since you've always been so eager for details of my life "on duty" perhaps you'd like to know what happens when I'm off it, and why, of all times, when this affair of Verdun is at its height I should take an opportunity to slip out of my trench.

The truth is that I am the proud and swift vanquisher of the most gorgeous attack of grippe you ever saw. I got the best of it with a celerity that should win me a doctor's degree at least, and a decoration for my good *vieille* who attended to my wants with an enthusiastic faithfulness.

Behold me, then, restored but shaky, with that indefinite feeling in one's propellers that follows a fever. I returned to my "service" but didn't feel brilliant, and when I heard there was prospect of another evacuation, having matters to discuss with Mme. Carnot, I concluded it was the time appointed to migrate, if I wanted to be fresh for the coming strain, which will be fierce. The *Médecin-Chef*, who has never failed to show me his confidence and esteem, wanted to give me an

unlimited "*permission,*" with much advice to "stoke up" for the summer. But I chose to fix 10 days, which I can prolong later if I choose.

My birthday party, which couldn't be held on the right day because I was ill, we had on Friday afternoon — two big cakes, all soft and creamy inside, with a candle for each *blessé*. We had it just after supper, for there's little time for mirth and trifling, and it being nearly dark with lovely stars outside, the little constellation on the table showed up bravely. It's astonishing how these children, old and young, love anything that shines. Indeed, it was their delight over the tree at Christmas, that made me think of having a birthday party — a fête, as you know, that I usually prefer to suppress. But it was excuse for candles, and

no time for private aversions, and I admit, I never saw such a successful party. Even the two fractures that groan all the time, and the smashed-up *estragale* who expects to lose his foot, forgot to be miserable; and the big butcher who is furious with all of us because we don't relieve him of his left arm (he swears it's no use to let a joint like that grow any longer, and treats our really good and conscientious surgeon for a fool every time he sees him) softened to a smile.

Then on Saturday morning, I took the early train. Don't imagine I lack the protection of the Church. It awaited me at the station in the shape of good Pasteur Saintenac, who represents the Protestant persuasion at the Ambulance in a mild and godly way. For the rest, he does the work of a simple *infirmier auxiliaire*, runs

errands, takes the guard, and washes dishes very submissively, and gives you the impression that he would court persecution "as unto the Lord." When he does the dishes in my *salle*, if I have a possible moment, I always go and help, with an instinctive effort to equalize the unfitness of things. Pasteur S. was awfully concerned about my going off alone. If the recent birth of his infant son hadn't put his wife in the impossibility of receiving visitors, he would have insisted on my accepting his humble hospitality. Utterly useless to explain that Paris was a sort of home to me, that I had friends there, and much to do. He must needs meet me on the platform with his hands full of letters addressed to pastors and other good people in Paris, to be *delivered in person!* In these letters he exhorts his

friends to surround me with sympathy and Christian affection.

It was a lovely morning, soft and silvered with light mists that veiled the rising sun. I had forgotten the world was so beautiful, that spring tints were so delicious, that the forms of trees and brooks and clustering villages were so alluring. I assure you that an optical alteration takes place when you have looked at nothing earnestly but white sheets, alas! too often gray, and pale faces and red wounds for a long time, and your retina gets sensitive to beauty in a way that is amazing. At Châlons there came into my compartment — first class, if you please, which is rather handsome of the Government — a lieutenant of the 251st Inf., going home on five days' leave. Of course we began to talk about Verdun,

and if I had any doubts about a victory final and complete, this stalwart soldier, fresh from the trenches, was ready to dissipate them. He'd "seen war" at less than 50 metres, from the start, and moreover his wife and children, mother and sisters had been held prisoners in the invaded district for over a year, but "*Nous les aurons, les Boches!*" he kept reiterating with a conviction that couldn't be doubted. Altogether it was a profitable journey; and most surprising, we arrived nearly on schedule time. At the beginning of the *rue*, the trains sometimes took twenty-two hours between Paris and Vitry.

March 21/16.

Well, the charm of the Charmer is beginning to tell, and I keep repeating to myself what you so often used to say

when we went out together — "Was there ever such a place as Paris?" It is a particularly rare moment, too — clouds and soft sun, the ghost of a green shimmer along that most triumphant of all vistas, up the Elysian Fields, violets and jonquils at every street corner, and flags and trophies aflutter everywhere in honor of our illustrious visitors. For yesterday the Generalissimo Cadorna arrived, amidst a furor of "*Viva l'Italia.*" To-day it is the turn of Serbia's illustrious prince to drown his misfortune in sympathy and champagne. To my great disgust I could see neither of them, but the Red Cross is an absorbing profession, and if one is to be worthy of its insignia, one might as well make up one's mind not to do or think about anything else. All day I've spent chasing about seeing officers and secretaries and

dignitaries, with rather better results than one generally gets when affairs are taken out in talking. Also, I've had opened my cases recently arrived from you and your friends, to see what they contained; after which they will be closed ready to follow me to the scene of action. They'd just come a little while ago, so no time has been lost. Oh, what a harvest! When I saw those dear little wash-cloths and hot water bags and rings, and oil-cloth and malted milk, I almost wept; and what a blessing to have all that cotton and gauze! The coming months will melt it fast enough, and Heaven only knows where the material is to come from to close up all the wounds that will be made before next autumn. Thank God, there is *you* to "hold up my hands" as you call it, that would too often drop lifeless in

sheer despair. Also I went to the *Comité des Secours Américains* — a spacious, elegant interior with high windows looking toward the Seine, and the prettiest bevy of busy stenographers. We do things well and no mistake, as I took pains to tell the nice, drawly Georgian sub-secretary who attended to me. But the best thing I did during the day was to arrange with a deputy to see Godard about certain things and acts of the *Service de Santé* on the front.

PARIS, March 23/16.

With the instinct of self-preservation (not to say revolt) that you've seen of old, after a shopping bout, I've fled to this graceful rotunda overlooking the chimney pots to restore my scattered faculties with a cup of China tea. There are soft blue flowers on the table, the tea found the

"right spot," and I have a satisfying sense of commissions finished, which gives me the right to laze for the rest of the afternoon. O, the luxury of "staying put" and doing nothing! Moreover there is the Eiffel Tower all dim and fantastic off yonder against an opal sky, standing guardian like over the safety of Paris, sentinel at her aërial portal, and challenging all sorts of vague verses that are hesitating there at the back of my brain. Let them lie! I'm sure I'd trip up on their feet, and it's much more profitable to have a good cosy chat with you, and tell you all my intimate commonplaces, than dawdle over a rhyme.

A heightened morale is gaining all along the front — of hopeful significance. The spirit of the men from Verdun is infinitely brighter than those of Champagne in

September. Not that the latter were depressed, but these have a light on their faces as if they really saw the end of the tunnel. God grant it!

Thank you for "The Hill-Top on the Marne." It is a good experience, spiritedly sketched, and I like the lady's pluck. It was diverting to read English again after so long.

The lights in the boulevard below have begun to come out, and the Eiffel Tower has faded into the mist.

April 1st, Vitry.

I am ecstatic over getting back to work! Now that my Parisian fling is over, I might as well own that it was a terrific strain on my nerves. I discovered that a civilian life is unhealthy for me, and that I thrive under the banner of the Red

Cross. Since peace doesn't appear imminent that is an encouraging discovery! There were eleven of the original Verdun group in the *salle* on my return and you should have heard the shout of welcome. It was a regular fête at every bedside. When I got down toward the end of the *salle* I found one beardless hero lying beaming in his bed, with two tiny lighted candles stuck to the rail above his head, the candles of my birthday cake "to celebrate your return, little mother — you must never leave us again."

You ask about "the skeleton." You will be glad to know he is at Toulouse, on the high road to walking. He writes that the work I did on those poor turned-down feet was lastingly satisfactory. He had double anthrotomie of the knees, and when he came the insteps were bent like

a ballet-dancer's. Even admitting his recovery, which seemed impossible, he would be obliged to go about on the points of his toes, the knees being permanently stiff. At first, after "peeling" with every conceivable dissolvent, I began just the slightest *effleurissage* which developed into massage, and then I invented an apparatus. Now don't laugh! any how it straightened out the difficulty. A board about 14 inches square was padded with cotton and swathed neatly in a bandage. This was laid vertical against the soles of the feet, which I tried to place as nearly as possible in a normal position. Then I attached a bandage (having no elastic, which would have been better) to the head rail of the bed on one side, passed it around the board and up the other side, fastening it again to the rail as taut as possible. The

knot was tightened twice a day. Result — in two weeks those refractory feet had regained a proper attitude. You who live in the land of perfect apparatus will smile, but just remember that Ambulance 1/2 lacks several things.

Easter-eve.

Great merriment this evening. The Captain's gramophone is in full swing and thirty-two pairs of eyes are dancing with delight and thirty-two pairs of hands, many bandaged, are feebly beating time to the "Policeman's Holiday One Step," which is equally appreciated with Beethoven's "Leonore." It makes a relief after Good Friday with its fasting and general solemnity.

Easter Sunday.

A happy Easter! If you've thought of me this sunny morning, and I'm sure you

have — you've probably guessed that *bébé s'amuse.* So you wouldn't have been surprised an hour ago when the *Médecin-Chef,* finding my office momentarily converted into a work-shop with ribbons and bows all over, ejaculated in a puzzled way, "Americans must remain little girls a long while to imagine that grown-up *poilus* could be amused in that way." To which I replied (not being in the least afraid of him) that he was evidently no psychologist, and he retreated, laughing good naturedly, and shaking his head as if it were hopeless to think of educating an American Indian! But if the sight of all those nests disturbed so his ideas of military fitness, it had a different effect on the "children," who applauded and shouted as if it were the most natural surprise in the world. Too bad, I can't

send you a model, but here's the plan: a white sugar hen with a pink comb and pompous tail, and a favor of the Allies round her neck, sits serenely upon eight excellent chocolate eggs in a nest woven out of Boston excelsior, and lined with cotton and arbor vitæ. Multiply this by thirty-three and you have the results of last night's cheerful labor which received an even more radiant welcome than I expected. Such a holding out of bandaged hands, such a gobbling of hens with their feathers on and eggs in their shells, such a general vein of satisfaction as throbs through the *salle* now while the gramophone goes round, as would convince you that the principal rôle of a nurse, after all, is not to mop up blood and put on bandages, but to lie awake thinking up such nonsense as this. (I'd *not* dare make

such an extravagant remark to any but you, for they'd be sure to say I carry my responsibilities too lightly, but *you know better*.) I have to make a confession though. When my poor little *amputé* saw his nest, he smiled for the first time since he came, six weeks ago, and pled so to be allowed to eat an egg that I couldn't resist, despite his careful liquid diet. What was my horror ten minutes later to come back and find that he had screwed around — Heaven knows how — and gotten hold of the hen that I had thought safely out of reach, and left nothing of her but the ribbon collar! Its only sugar after all, but I have compunctions over the size, and the coloring matter of the comb and tail. So far, however, the change of diet seems to agree famously, and has given him the courage to look at pictures for

the first time. It was a bit hard not to be able to go to church to-day. As you so often deplore I'm not much of an orthodox. But there are times when it's pretty much of a necessity. On Good Friday though, in lieu of the three-hour service I managed to spend two hours in my room between twelve and three, and have a long think and a prayer which did me a world of good. I send you a puzzle which was made to surprise me by a most adorable patient who managed to trace these intricate lines with a bandaged hand. Oh the piles and piles of cards and letters that I have to show you when the war is over! I've not sent any lest they be lost; and indeed when my collection began to be an encumbrance, for fear of trusting them to the post I gave them into Monsieur Bardy's care, when he came to visit his son.

The *salle* is full and I have a series of contusions which means many massages to develop my muscles. My little *amputé* is out of danger. So all goes well, and to crown everything the weather is glorious, though the last two days have been painfully hot at noon, and give ominous foretaste of summer in these frail barracks. It will be as rigorous as winter, and the wounds already need more vigilance. So far though *it is all right.*

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"Mademoiselle Miss";
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American girl serving
with the rank of
lieutenant in a
French army ...

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